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ABSTRACT

Noting that much has been written about children who have difficulty learning to read but little has been written about children who are fluent early readers, this book explores why some children succeed in reading at a very early age. The book resulted from a 3-year research project that studied the progress of 29 English children before they started school until the end of Year 2, when they were given their first National Curriculum assessments. Fifteen of the children were able to read fluently before they began school, and 14 of the children started to read with relative ease once they began to receive instruction in school. Chapter 1, "In the Beginning . . . Reading and Writing," presents an overview of contemporary understanding of how literacy develops. Chapter 2, "The Project," discusses procedures used to identify children for the study, presents profiles of the study participants, and discusses data collection. Chapter 3, "The Children," presents portraits of the children gained from questionnaires given to their parents at the start of the project. Chapter 4, "Reading," explores the performance of the children on reading-related tasks, while chapter 5, "Writing," discusses their performance on various writing tasks. Chapter 6, "Teacher Interviews," details the interviews held with the children's teachers, while chapter 7, "Interviews with Parents," focuses on the information obtained from parent interviews held at the end of the 3 school years over which the study was conducted. Chapter 8, "Child Interviews," details the semi-structured interviews that were held with the children toward the end of the project. Chapter 9, "Learning from Successful Readers," considers how the data collected in this study relate to current theories of literacy development. A list of English phonemes is appended. Contains an 87-item bibliography. (LPP)

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